
AP[®] United States History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

Inside:

Document-Based Question

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
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Question 1: Document-Based Question, Economic Changes US Society

7 points

General Scoring Notes

- Except where otherwise noted, each point of these rubrics is earned independently; for example, a student could earn a point for evidence without earning a point for thesis/claim.
- **Accuracy:** The components of these rubrics require that students demonstrate historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.
- **Clarity:** Exam essays should be considered first drafts and thus may contain grammatical errors. Those errors will not be counted against a student unless they obscure the successful demonstration of the content knowledge, skills, and practices described below.

Evaluate the extent to which economic changes influenced United States society between 1865 to 1910.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis/Claim (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Are not historically defensible. - Only restate or rephrase the prompt. - Do not respond to the prompt. - Do not establish a line of reasoning. - Are overgeneralized.	Responses that earn this point: Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about the extent to which economic changes influenced United States society between 1865 to 1910. The thesis or claim must either provide some indication of the reason for making that claim OR establish categories of the argument.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Provide a restatement of the prompt <i>“The economy changed in the United States from 1865 to 1910.”</i> Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning <i>“The United States industrialized in the 1800s.”</i> Do not focus on the topic of the prompt <i>“The United States became more imperialistic in the late 1800s.”</i>	Examples that earn this point: Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt <i>“As businesses became larger and more powerful in the 1800s, Progressive reformers during the early 1900s passed laws restraining the power of businesses.”</i> Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories <i>“From 1865 to 1910, economic changes influenced United States society through the expansion of industrialization, consolidation of corporations into trusts, and the widespread employment of immigrants in factories.”</i> Establish a line of reasoning <i>“The most important way economic change influenced United States society was that corporations grew bigger.”</i> [Minimally acceptable thesis/claim]
	Additional Notes: - The thesis or claim must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion (which may not be limited to the first or last paragraphs). - The thesis or claim must identify a relevant development(s) in the period, although it is not required to encompass the entire period.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row B Contextualization (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt. - Provide context that is not relevant to the prompt. - Provide a passing phrase or reference.	Responses that earn this point: Accurately describe a context relevant to economic changes in the United States between 1865 to 1910.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Do not provide context relevant to the topic of the prompt <i>“The United States declared independence in 1776.”</i> Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt <i>“During this time period Americans had lots of different jobs.”</i>	Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: - Market revolution - Transportation revolution - First Industrial Revolution - Westward expansion / Manifest Destiny - Mexican-American War - Civil War - First World War - Roaring ‘20s - Great Depression Examples of acceptable contextualization: <i>“The industrial capabilities created during this period helped to drive military production in the United States during the First World War.”</i> <i>“During the 1800s the United States built more factories and work by artisans declined.”</i> [Minimally acceptable contextualization]
Additional Notes: - The response must describe broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question that are relevant to the topic of the prompt. - To earn this point, the context provided must be more than a phrase or reference.		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row C Evidence from Documents	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Uses the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt.	2 points Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least four documents.
(0–2 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Responses that do not earn points: - Use evidence from less than three of the documents - Misinterpret the content of the document - Quote the content of the documents without providing an accompanying description - Address documents collectively rather than considering separately the content of each document	Responses that earn 1 point: - Accurately describe—rather than simply quote—the content from at least three of the documents to address economic changes in the United States between 1865 to 1910. Examples of describing the content of a document: Describe evidence from the documents relevant to the topic but do not use that evidence to support an argument [Document 7]: “The political cartoon shows Teddy Roosevelt trying to control trusts, which are represented by a bronco.”	Responses that earn 2 points: - Support an argument in response to the prompt by accurately using the content of at least four documents. Examples of supporting an argument using the content of a document: [Document 1]: “In the sermon, Vinton supports the uniting of the country through expansion of the railroads across the continent, which showed how business interests intersected with political goals.” [Uses evidence from the document to support an argument about the relationship between business interests and territorial expansion] [Document 5]: “Kelley explained how the union label system developed in response to unsafe working conditions, which intensified as a result of industrialization in the late nineteenth century.” [Uses evidence from the document to support an argument about how organized labor developed in response to new business practices during the Gilded Age]
	Additional Notes: To earn two points, the four documents do not have to be used in support of a single argument—they can be used across sub-arguments or to address counterarguments.		

Row C Evidence Beyond Documents	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Uses at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence [beyond that found in the documents] relevant to an argument in response to the prompt.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
(0–1 points)	Responses that do not earn this point: • Provide evidence that is not relevant to an argument about the prompt. • Provide evidence that is outside the time period or region specified in the prompt. • Repeat information that is specified in the prompt or in any of the documents. • Provide a passing phrase or reference.	Responses that earn this point: • Must use at least one specific piece of historical evidence relevant to economic changes in the United States between 1865 to 1910. Examples of specific and relevant evidence beyond the documents that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: • Progressives • Populist Party [People’s Party] • The “New South” • Social Gospel • Boom towns • Sharecropping • Haymarket Riot • Major industrialists [e.g. Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller] • William Jennings Bryan • Sherman Anti-Trust Act • Gilded Age • Vertical/horizontal integration • Second Industrial Revolution • Knights of Labor Examples of evidence beyond the documents relevant to an argument about the prompt: • <i>“Advocates of the Social Gospel sought to address the social problems of industrialization by promoting activism to help the poor and reform the economy as a key part of their religious beliefs.”</i> [Provides a piece of evidence not in the documents relevant to an argument about how economic changes shaped reform groups in United States society] • <i>“As companies got larger and richer, it became possible for them to start buying up their competitors in a process called horizontal integration, which often gave the companies a lot of power over markets for particular goods or access to transportation.”</i> [Provides a piece of evidence not in the documents relevant to an argument about how the size of businesses influenced their power]

	Additional Notes: • Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization. • To earn this point, the evidence provided must be different from the evidence used to earn the point for contextualization. • To earn this point, the evidence provided must be more than a phrase or reference. • The point for evidence beyond the documents may be awarded for evidence that appears in any part of the response.
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Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row D Analysis and Reasoning Sourcing	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point For at least two documents, explains how or why the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Explain sourcing for fewer than two of the documents. - Identify the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience but fail to explain how or why it is relevant to an argument. - Summarize the content or argument of the document without explaining the relevance of this summary to the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience. Examples that do not earn this point: Identify the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience, but do not explain how or why it is relevant to an argument <i>“The point of view of Document 1 is that the railroad is good for the country.”</i> Summarize the content of the document without explaining the relevance of this to the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience <i>“The author of Document 3 argues that monopolies are bad.”</i>	Responses that earn this point: - Must explain how or why—rather than simply identifying—the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, or audience is relevant to an argument that addresses the prompt for each of the two documents sourced. Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the author’s point of view: [Document 3]: <i>“As a formerly enslaved woman, Parsons understood how a small economic elite could dominate a larger group of laborers to its benefit, and therefore, she is seeking to take action to unite middle- and working-class Americans against the growing strength of monopolies.”</i> [Connects the point of view of the document relevant to an argument regarding activism’s relationship with economic inequality during the Gilded Age] Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the author’s purpose: [Document 5]: <i>“Kelley’s purpose was to promote purchasing union-made goods so that consumers helped to ensure that factories with good working conditions prospered while those with poor conditions failed.”</i> [Connects the purpose of the document relevant to an argument that addresses the reaction of organized labor to the changing economy] Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the historical situation of a source: [Document 7]: <i>“By the early 1900s, corporations had consolidated their power over entire industries, creating trusts that Progressive reformers such as Roosevelt sought to limit by increasing the power of the government to regulate the economy.”</i> [Connects the historical situation of the document relevant to an argument that addresses how reform movements developed in response to the changing economy of the Gilded Age] Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the audience: [Document 4]: <i>“Harrison’s audience was voters in the upcoming election, and the importance of the economy to United States society is demonstrated by the fact that he believed that he could gain a political advantage with these voters by accusing Democrats of harming the economy through their treatment of businesses.”</i> [Connects the audience of the document relevant to an argument that addresses how economic change impacted United States politics]

Row D Analysis and Reasoning Complexity	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt through sophisticated argumentation and/or effective use of evidence.
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
		Responses that earn this point: May demonstrate a complex understanding through sophisticated argumentation that is relevant to the prompt. This may be done in a variety of ways, such as: - Explaining multiple themes or perspectives to explore complexity or nuance; OR - Explaining multiple causes or effects, multiple similarities or differences, or multiple continuities or changes; OR - Explaining both cause and effect, both similarity and difference, or both continuity and change; OR - Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods or geographical areas. These connections should clearly relate to an argument that responds to the prompt. May demonstrate a complex understanding through effective use of evidence relevant to an argument that addresses the prompt. This may be done in a variety of ways, such as: - Effectively using seven documents to support an argument that responds to the prompt; OR - Explaining how the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience of at least four documents supports an argument that responds to the prompt; OR - Using documents and evidence beyond the documents effectively to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of different perspectives relevant to the prompt. Demonstrating a complex understanding might include any of the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: - A response may argue that the consolidation of corporations such as Standard Oil into trusts was an important factor that contributed to political change in the late nineteenth century. It then uses evidence from Documents 2 and 3 to qualify this claim. It argues that the root cause of political change at this time was the changing relationship between workers and business owners, which led to class tensions that contributed to the Populist movement and that Progressives sought to reduce through reform. [Uses documents and evidence beyond the documents to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of different perspectives] - A response may argue that the influence of the economic changes on United States society was felt most dramatically through the introduction of new industrial processes that made the production of goods easier. It then argues that in a broader view, this was just a continuation of the rise of capitalism that began during the colonial era, expanded during the market revolution before the Civil War, and continued throughout the twentieth century. [Explains relevant and insightful connections across periods] - A response may argue that the most important change to the economy was the development of new industrial technologies that facilitated the growth of factories, making production more efficient and increasing the size of a working class employed by wealthy industrialists. It then goes on to argue that new business practices such as vertical and horizontal integration also made businesses operate more efficiently and further influenced the distribution of wealth in society. [Explains multiple causes]

	Additional Notes: • This complex understanding must be part of the argument and may be demonstrated in any part of the response. • While it is not necessary for this complex understanding to be woven throughout the response, it must be more than merely a phrase or reference. • To earn a point for complexity by using seven documents in support of an argument, there must be an attempt to use all seven documents to effectively support an argument, but the use of the documents may be unevenly or inconsistently developed, or the document use may be weaker in one or two instances.
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Document Summaries

Document	Summary of Content	Explains the relevance of point of view [POV], purpose, situation, and/or audience by elaborating on examples such as:
1. Francis Vinton, sermon, 1869	- Describes the successful completion of a transcontinental railroad - Claims the transcontinental railroad will help unite the nation	- As a minister, Vinton is trying to encourage unity and cooperation. [point of view] - Vinton’s sermon comes shortly after the conclusion of the Civil War, which tore the nation apart. [situation]
2. Henry George, <i>Progress and Poverty</i> , 1879	- Describes the growth of production in the 1800s - Claims progress has not eliminated poverty - Argues progress through increased wealth is not real as long as poverty still exists	- Through the growth and consolidation of industries and corporations, the economic benefits of industrialization were felt unevenly, resulting in the growth of a class of extremely wealthy industrialists. [situation] - George sought to convince readers that more needed to be done to address poverty, as progress alone was not solving the problem. [purpose]
3. Lucy Parsons, interview, 1886	- Claims that corporate monopolies are reducing the size of the middle class - Argues that class conflict between owners and wage earners will increase until people change the economic system themselves - Argues that strikes demonstrate that Americans are dissatisfied with wage earning	- Parsons tells her readers that the economic structure needs to change, arguing that industrial capitalism kept wage workers in poverty and would continue to do so, squeezing even the middle class eventually in with the working class. [purpose] - The intensification of social unrest in the late 1800s, especially among industrial workers and ordinary farmers, contributed to the growth of labor unions and the Populist Party. [situation]
4. Benjamin Harrison, speech, 1894	- Argues that factories help society by providing people with work and decent wages - Argues that Democratic leaders hate American industry - Calls to end class hostility against industry	- As a former Republican president, Harrison believed that industrialists made the nation better by improving the economy and providing jobs. [point of view] - Harrison sought to convince his listeners during an election campaign that it was not in the country’s best interest to vote for what he calls the anti-business Democratic Party and, therefore, they should support the Republican Party. [audience]
5. M.E.J. Kelley, “The Union Label,” 1897	- Describes the origins of union labels - Describes how union labels help consumers identify goods produced in factories that follow the law and are not sweatshops - Argues that union labels help people bring ethics into commerce - Argues that ethical awareness of sweatshops will lead to their end	- The article was targeted at consumers, explaining how consumers buying products with a union label could help end poor manufacturing conditions. [audience] - Kelley argued that consumers had a responsibility to help ensure that labor is not done in sweatshops, arguing that consumers just support labor unions by purchasing goods with union labels. [purpose]

AP® United States History 2025 Scoring Guidelines

6. “Industrial Leadership,” 1900	- Argues that mass production, not military ventures, is the source of United States international strength - Argues that engineers and managers ensure continued success of the economy - Argues that industry must speak to politicians so they recognize that industry and commerce must thrive if the nation is to thrive as well	- The writer wants his readers to believe that in industry, commerce, not military exploits, help lead to the success of the nation. He celebrates the training and expertise of the leaders of industry, arguing that they should take a greater role in national politics. [purpose] - Around 1900, business leaders sought to influence the United States government to pursue policies that they would benefit from, especially by promoting access to markets and economic opportunities through imperialism in the Caribbean, Latin America, and eastern Asia. [situation]
7. Bartholomew cartoon, 1903	- Depicts Theodore Roosevelt riding a horse labeled “The Trusts” - Shows Roosevelt seeking to restrain trusts with a bridle labeled “trust control laws”	- The image represents an “anti-trust” point of view, criticizing the existence of trusts and supporting the efforts of government, such as those of Theodore Roosevelt, to limit their power. [point of view] - By the early 1900s, the consolidation of corporations into trusts that had power over entire industries led to the growth of the Progressive movement, which advocated increased government regulation of the economy. [situation]

The period from 1865 to 1910 was one of great social and economic change in America. Abraham Lincoln's Presidency heralded many changes to American Society through the Civil War, like freeing African American Slaves with the 13th amendment. This unintentionally created a new system called sharecropping. There was also a reform of the economic state of society, with the growth of PBBLF policies in government and the advancement of a strong Republican federal government before the progressive era. **Economic changes in the US like railroads, the captains of industry, controlling of trusts, and the protection of peoples rights influenced American Society to a great extent, instigating both positive and negative social changes, for example, American unity, and _but also class division, poverty, and discrimination.**

Economic Changes in the US like the transcontinental railroad, the captains of industry, and teddy roosevelts trust busting influences United States Society to a great extent, creating revolutionary positive social change like new wages, social justice, and american unity. Doc 1 explains how the construction of the transcontinental railroad across America will herald great changes in America, like economic stability, increased population, and the unification of America. *This historical context of this doc, is the sermon was delivered post civil war. this matters because at the time the US was still feeling the effects of the Civil War and sectionalism between the North and South, and the transcontinental railroad was helping to fix that.* This doc exemplifies how the economic construction of the transcontinental rail road is going to unite American society, contributing great social change in both expanding the ideas of western expansion and also solving sectionalism between the north and south. Doc 4 discusses how the Democratic party is against American manufacturers despite all the contributions they make to society, in giving people wages. The author of the doc also says how the two parties should stop fighting against the American industry. *The perspective of this Doc is Benjamin Harrison, former Republican US president, and his perspective matters because he, as a republican, sheds light on the ideas that republicans had about the captains of industry.* The captains of industry in the Gilded Age, according to Harrison, make great positive social change by giving employment to both men and women at decent prices. Historically, many Americans were taken advantage of for their labor, so Harrison's interpretation of America presents a positive social change that the Republican captains were implementing with their factories. Doc 6 has a similar interpretation, with a New York Times exemplifying that fact that Captains of Industry were regulating the economy in a helpful manner. *The intended audience of this Doc was readers who believed captains of industry were bad, and it wanted to help change their mind about them.* This doc believes that captains of industry are the driving force of the economy and their presence as economic leaders is heralding the positive social change of increased justice and wisdom in American society. There was also how the captains of industry made things more affordable for the working class by producing a lot for cheap. This is another great social change, seeing as things were made more widely available for people. Doc 7 is a political cartoon of President Teddy Roosevelt reigning in an out of control trust, personified by a donkey, with a trust control law helmet. *This doc's historical context is the Square Deal and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, in which Roosevelt limited the powers of trusts.* In limiting the power of trusts, through trust-busting laws. Roosevelt created a positive social change which helped to protect the economy against monopolies. One such law was the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, which limited monopolies. (EBD)

Economic Changes in the US like poverty, social division, robber barons, racist labeling in the workforce, influences United States Society to a great extent, creating revolutionary negative social change. Doc 2, an excerpt from an article by Henry George, describes how the increase in the power of the economy and a heightening amount of both wealth and modern progress will expand class division. He says that this social division between the haves and have-nots nullifies any economic expansion. This demonstrates a negative social change in US society, demonstrating the growth in the gap between the rich top percent business owners and the working class. Doc 3 has the same interpretation, saying how in the Gilded Age the middle class is funneled into two different groups, lower and upper class. *The perspective of this doc is from Lucy Parsons, a formerly enslaved woman and industrial activist. Her perspective on this issue is important because her time as an enslaved person means she knows what it is like to be in the lower class, and is more able to accurately predict how the middle class is turning.* This class division exemplified by the economic monopolies of the Robber Barons is a very negative social change. She speaks of how people are starving, despite there being so much wealth to go around. Doc 5 describes the racist practice of labeling the producers by their race.

However, some may say that this age was not a period of great social change. Many groups were continually discriminated against in the Gilded Age and Reconstruction Eras. After Abraham Lincoln emancipated the slaves, despite their freedom to not be enslaved anymore, many vulnerable African Americans were taken into the sharecropping system and taken advantage of through extremely low wages and forced debts to their landlords. Women also still did not have the right to vote at this time, and were still heavily buried under the ideals of sexism even despite their contributions to the Civil War in the workforce. (EBDs)

American society has gone through a lot after their initial fight for independence. 1865 and onward was a time after a war amongst themselves and like always they again made steps to better themselves as a country. They aim to continuously further improve the workings of society whether that be the people themselves or those around them. Now those improvements not only go to improve the quality of life the American people will have but also add to the American economy. Many economic events have left behind a mix of great influence in United States society between 1865-1910. Those with the most impact, good and bad, being the transcontinental railroad, the boom of industries, and unions.

To begin with, there is the transcontinental railroad which helped boost and improve the American trade. As America expanded the more land and territories there were existing which gave way for more possibilities in trade as each state could produce something to the benefit of trade. Not only did the railroad help in the Americans' trade it even helped to connect it as a country. The author's purpose was to highlight the completion of the railroad but to help Americans recognize what this could do for their country (Document 1).

Moreover, alongside this improvement the times move towards industrialization which helped create powerful business which ended up as monopolies. Though powerful business of steel and oil helped create economic success their greed often caused them to eat up other similar businesses, monopolizing their own business. While they created profits the greed of monopolies led to things like the Sherman trust act which was created to counter monopolies and prevent the further spread/expansion. The author's point of view shows that the rapid growth and success was what caused problems in between classes (Document 3). This shows that despite the success of businesses at the time they also created issues and problems that needed to be addressed. In Document 4 the author's purpose is to highlight the feelings of the Democratic party towards industries and manufacturers. This adds to the idea of what should be addressed regarding industries and monopolies. While one party is solely praising it the other goes to show a reasonable concern that this issue is bringing to light. Undoubtedly, the success businesses/industries got should not be undermined as they did help the economy prosper and led to the growth within American society. However, one can be grateful for the success it brought while understanding the issues it brought. Like the Republicans people can see the greatness the industry has brought for America and some even go to show their belief in how they will what be what leads the US into further success. The author's purpose is to highlight the importance and the hold industries have in society. They help address the benefits industries will bring as they are what help the country expand its influence (Document 6).

Last but not least, there are unions which helped protect workers in these industrial times. Though industrialization brought employment opportunities to people worker were often taken advantage of. In the light of America's new economic success unions were what helped workers secure their wages and proper treatment at work. In Document 5 the author's purpose is to address how unions will help erase sweatshops, where workers are treated unfairly, for the sake of the employees themselves and the American consumers.

Ultimately, the transcontinental railroad, industries/monopolies, and unions have helped American society to greatly prosper while still creating some issues here and there.

The changes that influenced United States society between 1865 to 1910 economically were very big. As America was still growing and expanding, there was still much work to be done in a majority of ways, but economically speaking, some things that progressed were productivity increase, equality in the workforce, and the stopping of large corporations from making monopolies.

Increasing productivity was one of the first steps to helping the economy, with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, goods, such as livestock and crops, were able to travel across the country in a more efficient way (Doc 1), therefore allowing for a decrease in unusable goods due to spoiling over traveling long distances for long periods of time. Another reason for increased productivity was better efficiency, as the US grew in age, better ways to produce goods emerged, finding the cheapest way to produce the most goods (Doc 6). This improved international trading relations and boosted the economy.

Another influence of economic change was the fight for better treatment in the workforce. Benjamin Harrison, a former Republican president of the United States, talked about gender equality how he didn't understand why a man couldn't give decent wages to both men and women workers (Doc 4). This shows the gender inequality in the workforce and the awareness of society about it. Female labor reformer, M. E. J. Kelley, in an article in 1897 to the American population talked about the use of union labels and ethics on whether it is morally right to let workers work under conditions acceptable to society, consumers, or acceptable to the workers, producers (Doc 5). This shows the dilemmas that many company workers have to go through.

The movement stopping of monopolies was also influenced by economic change. Lucy Parsons talked about how big corporations and monopolies are detrimental to the working middle class (Doc 3) because the middle class is forced to owe money to the capital in order to be able to continue working and receiving wages. This shows how monopolies were causing more harm than good to the population. President Teddy Roosevelt, addressing the country, passed Trust Control Laws to make the creation of monopolies illegal in 1903 (Doc 7), this showed how the President was aware of the economic problems this was causing and stopped it from continuing.

In closing, economic change influenced many developments in US society withing the time period of 1865 to 1910. Productivity increased through the completion of the transcontinental railroad and more efficient producing methods. The fight for better workforce treatment started through important people talking about gender inequality and safety. And the stopping of monopolies happened through the creation of Trust Control Laws.

Question 1 – Document-Based Question

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

NEW for 2025: The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses* on [AP Central](#).

Sample: 1A

Thesis Score: 1

Contextualization Score: 1

Evidence from Documents Score: 2

Evidence Beyond Documents Score: 1

Analysis and Reasoning: Sourcing Score: 1

Analysis and Reasoning: Complexity Score: 1

Total Score: 7

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for thesis because it provides a historically defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning in the last sentence of the first paragraph: **“Economic changes in the US like railroads, the captains of industry, controlling of trusts, and the protection of peoples rights influenced American Society to a great extent, instigating both positive and negative social changes, for example, American unity, and _but also class divison, poverty, and discrimination.”**

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization. In the first paragraph, the response describes changes to United States society and its economy due to the Civil War.

C. Evidence

Evidence from the Documents (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point for using evidence from three documents to address the topic of the prompt.

Question 1 – Document-Based Question (continued)

The response earned 1 point for using the content of at least four documents to support an argument in response to the prompt. In total, all seven documents are used to support an argument. In the second paragraph, Document 1 is used to support an argument that the construction of the transcontinental railroad influenced the economy as well as society by unifying the regions of the United States and bringing “economic stability.” Document 4 is used to support an argument that captains of industry created positive social changes through creating jobs for men and women. Document 6 is used to support an argument that the captains of industry were the driving force in the economy and that their leadership created positive social change by lowering the cost of goods. Document 7 is used to make the argument that the government, specifically Theodore Roosevelt, took action to limit the power of trusts, leading to positive social change. In the third paragraph, the overall argument is about how increased industrialization also led to harms for society due to growing wealth inequality and poverty. Document 2 is used to argue that class divisions deepened in society and tempered the benefits of economic growth. Document 3 is used to argue that the shrinking of the middle class was a negative social effect of the rise of “Robber Barons.” Document 5 is used to argue that labeling goods as being produced by white workers showed that the increase in racism was another negative outcome of the economic changes of the time period.

Evidence Beyond the Documents (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for using evidence beyond the documents relevant to an argument about the prompt. In the fourth paragraph there is a discussion of how the growth of sharecropping was an example of negative economic and social changes during the post–Civil War era.

D. Analysis and Reasoning**Document Sourcing (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for document sourcing. Among other examples, in the second paragraph the response explains the historical situation for Document 1 and connects it to its argument related to American unity. At the end of the second paragraph the response places Document 7 within the historical situation of the Square Deal, explaining how it connects to a broader argument about attempts to create positive social change.

Demonstrating Complex Understanding (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for demonstrating a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt. The response meets the rubric standard in multiple ways. The response makes a nuanced argument that the economic changes between 1865 and 1910 had multiple effects, both improving and harming United States society. In addition, the response effectively uses seven documents to support an argument that responds to the prompt.

Question 1 – Document-Based Question (continued)**Sample: 1B****Thesis Score: 1****Contextualization Score: 0****Evidence from Documents Score: 2****Evidence Beyond Documents Score: 1****Analysis and Reasoning: Sourcing Score: 0****Analysis and Reasoning: Complexity Score: 0****Total Score: 4****A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for thesis because it provides a historically defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning in the last two sentences of the first paragraph: “Many economic events have left behind a mix of great influence in United States society between 1865-1910. Those with the most impact, good and bad, being the transcontinental railroad, the boom of industries, and unions.”

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for contextualization. In the first paragraph, the response describes how “American society has gone through a lot” and “made steps to better themselves” and “improve the workings of society,” but this is too vague. The mention of “onward was a time of war” is a passing phrase that does not earn the point.

C. Evidence**Evidence from the Documents (0–2 points): 2**

The response earned 1 point for using evidence from at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt.

The response earned 1 point for using the content of at least four documents to support an argument in response to the prompt. In total, four documents are used to support an argument. In the second paragraph, Document 1 is used to support an argument that the transcontinental railroad boosted trade between states and helped to connect the country. In the third paragraph Document 3 is used to support an argument that the rapid growth and success of monopolies caused problems between classes. In the fourth paragraph, Document 4 is used to support an argument that the growth of industry created a divide between Republicans and Democrats, as one party emphasized the successes brought by economic change while the other considered “the issues it brought.” In the fifth paragraph, Document 5 is used to argue that the development of unions and union labels reflected how some workers were “taken advantage of” at the time.

Evidence Beyond the Documents (0–1 points): 1

The response did earn the point for evidence beyond the documents. In the third paragraph, there is a discussion of the Sherman Antitrust Act.

Question 1 – Document-Based Question (continued)**D. Analysis and Reasoning****Document Sourcing (0–1 points): 0**

The response did not earn the point for document sourcing. The response attempts to source Documents 3 and 5, but the discussions do not explain how the documents are relevant to an argument that is tied to the prompt.

Demonstrating Complex Understanding (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding because it makes no attempt at sophisticated argumentation or effective use of evidence.

Sample: 1C**Thesis Score: 1****Contextualization Score: 0****Evidence from Documents Score: 1****Evidence Beyond Documents Score: 0****Analysis and Reasoning: Sourcing Score: 0****Analysis and Reasoning: Complexity Score: 0****Total Score: 2****A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for thesis because it provides a historically defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning in the last paragraph: “Economic change influenced many developments in US society withing the time period of 1865 to 1910. Productivity increased through the completion of the transcontinental railroad and more efficient producing methods. The fight for better workforce treatment started through important people talking about gender inequality and safety. And the stopping of monopolies happened through the creation of Trust Control Laws.”

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 0

The response does not earn the point for contextualization. In the first paragraph, the response mentions that the United States was “growing and expanding,” but this is not sufficient to earn the point as it is too vague.

C. Evidence**Evidence from the Documents (0–2 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for using evidence from at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt. Six documents are discussed in the essay addressing the topic of the prompt, but the content of both Documents 3 and 4 are described incorrectly.

The response did not earn 1 point for using the content of at least four documents to support an argument in response to the prompt. None of the six documents discussed in the response are used to support an argument.

Question 1 – Document-Based Question (continued)**Evidence Beyond the Documents (0–1 points): 0**

The response did not earn 1 point for using evidence beyond the documents relevant to an argument in response to the prompt. Throughout the response, the evidence utilized is drawn exclusively from the documents.

D. Analysis and Reasoning**Document Sourcing (0–1 points): 0**

The response did not earn 1 point for document sourcing. In the second paragraph, the discussion of the historical situation of Documents 1 and 6 is too vague.

Demonstrating Complex Understanding (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding because it makes no attempt at sophisticated argumentation or effective use of evidence.